

VZCZCXYZ0020
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHSL #0584 3501439
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 151439Z DEC 08
FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2188

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000584

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CCA D. MCFARLAND

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/12/2018

TAGS: PREL CU LO

SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA: REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION OF TITLE III OF LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 126578

Classified By: Ambassador Vincent Obsitnik, for reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) We offer below the responses to questions asked by reftel regarding Slovakia's Cuba policy.

¶2. (C) Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba? A: In our view, Slovakia has worked to advance human rights and democracy in several specific ways.

Non-governmental organizations are providing assistance in building civil society and education; these organizations are funded with USG assistance, with the GoS's 2 percent opt-in tax for NGOs, and with money raised directly from the Slovak public. In addition, the Slovak Embassy in Havana offers free internet access to Cuban citizens on its premises. A number of prominent Slovak public figures, including several members of the European Parliament, sponsor the families of 17 political prisoners in Cuba. Finally, the GoS supports eight refugee families that have been relocated in Slovakia.

¶3. (C) Has the host country made public statements or undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in the national assemblies condemning human rights abuses in Cuba; or actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora? A: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs periodically issues statements supporting human rights in Cuba; it did so most recently in May 2008.

¶4. (C) Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and the host country in the past six months? A: No.

¶5. (C) Did the host country offer or deliver humanitarian or other assistance to the Cuban people in the wake of the major damage caused by Hurricanes Gustav (August 30) and Ike (September 8)? A: The Government of Slovakia contributed roughly \$30,000 in humanitarian assistance after the hurricanes.

¶6. (C) What is the nature of investments (and names, if known) that host country businesses have in Cuba? What host country businesses participated in the Havana Trade Fair (November 3)? A: We are unaware of any Slovak investments in Cuba or participation in the Havana Trade Fair.

¶7. (C) Are there any bilateral trade agreements or other cooperative agreements between host country and Cuba? A: A bilateral trade agreement between Slovakia and Cuba was signed in October 2008 and is awaiting ratification. Slovakia's imports from Cuba consist almost entirely of tobacco products; in 2006, the value of Cuban goods imported was roughly \$526,000. Cuba is the 76th most important market

¶8. (C) Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba, including but not limited to: scholarships for

host country nationals to study in Cuba; Cuban-paid medical travel for host country nationals; and Cuban doctors working in host country? A: We are unaware of any formal exchange programs between Slovakia and Cuba. The Ministry of Education's official list of international agreements does not include Cuba.

OBSITNIK